

## **Town of Westport Green Energy Task Force**

December 31, 2007

Dear Gordon,

Enclosed you will find the Green Energy Task Force's recommendations for reducing the Town of Westport's carbon footprint. We have divided the recommendations into four sections: the Town, education, business and residential.

This past summer the Task Force completed the carbon footprint report thanks to the fine work of intern Katrina Ellison. The report showed Westport created 500,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions or 18 tons per person in 2006. The Town operation including education was responsible for 3.7% of the total. A high percentage of the emissions are generated by the transportation sector that is largely beyond local control. Nevertheless, our per person level is comparable to similar towns such as Fairfield, CT and Cambridge, MA.

Upon reviewing the report, we set an interim goal for 2010 of reducing our footprint by 10%. While this might sound modest, it must be kept in mind that reductions at the local level are voluntary and emissions increase with economic growth. The Task Force will use as its community awareness program a request that each resident reduce his or her footprint by one ton per year. We anticipate 2008 to be the key year as we begin this program.

In addition to the carbon footprint completed in 2007, the Task Force also established a website: [Wegreenwestport.org](http://Wegreenwestport.org), created a logo thanks to Miggs Burroughs, took part in several events around town and is in the final stage of creating the "We Green Westport Pledge". The Pledge program will assist residents to decide what they might and can do to reduce their footprint. We find most residents are aware of global warming and want to do something but are uncertain what steps they might take. The Pledge will "commit" them to undertake steps to reduce their footprint and show the impact of selected changes that will allow the one-ton savings. For example, each CFL bulb will reduce emissions by 100 pounds. We will keep track of the pledged amount and report to the public how much has been pledged and how we are progressing toward our goal. Getting this message out will be the biggest challenge facing the Task Force in 2008.

In order to reach the largest possible audience we would ask that you use the "bully pulpit" to spread our message. While the Town departments are supportive of our green program, please emphasize how important this is to you. We propose that Town departments increase their budgets incrementally in the short-run to achieve long-term and lasting effects that indeed produce permanent reductions. Thus, every opportunity you may have to promote this message contributes to positive changes. When speaking at public events such as Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Y's Men and Y's Women, etc. please introduce and reinforce that reducing our

carbon footprint is an important Westport objective and one in which all residents and businesses can participate. Things happen when the chief executive of a state or city tells all how important such a program is to the community. Under your leadership we are confident it will also happen in Westport.

Once you have had time to review these recommendations we look forward to discussing your ideas for implementation.

With best wishes for the New Year we remain,

Sincerely,

Carl W. Leaman, Chair

Kimberly J. Lake, Vice Chair

## **Recommendations for the Town of Westport**

### **Accomplishments to Date**

- a. 20% carbon emissions reduction by 2010 by the Town
- b. Solar panels at Fire Headquarters
- c. Replace vehicles with hybrids where appropriate
- d. "No idle" policy for Fire, Public Works and Parks and Recreation vehicles
- e. Bio fuel for heating and diesel vehicles
- f. Install zone control to Fire HQ to make heating more efficient
- g. Complete re-lamping of Town Hall with energy efficient units
- h. Replacement of all garage doors with insulated doors
- i. Complete energy audit for Fire HQ, Police HQ and P&R Admin

### **Current Initiatives**

- a. Investigate alternative fuels for specific DPW equipment
- b. Replace old HVAC equipment at Town Hall with new energy efficient equipment; possibly incorporate geothermal
- c. Replacement equipment will be with energy efficient units
- d. Add Electronics Recycling to the current recycling program

### **Recommendations**

- a. Encourage the use of tele-conferencing in-lieu of traveling to Hartford, etc.
- b. Establish a municipal building standard to reflect LEED design criteria
- c. Establish local tax incentives for purchasing energy efficient vehicles and for implementing energy efficient practices
- d. Identify energy efficiency lobbying initiatives at State level which would benefit Town, residents and businesses

**Recommendations for the Town of Westport**  
**Mass Transit**

**Railroad Stations and Bus Stops**

- a. Ask the State to build a parking garage at Saugatuck station which will encourage increased ridership
- b. Provide free bus service to and from the stations for a 6 to 12 month trial period.
- c. Work with employees to improve travel between the railroad stations and Town Hall, schools and other Town facilities.
- d. Install solar panels at the stations
- e. Provide bus shelters along the Post Road to encourage additional Metro Link riders

## **Recommendations for the Town of Westport and the Board of Education**

### **Accomplishments to Date**

- a. School bus fuel switched to biodiesel
- b. Recycling efforts in place in some schools, like KHS, LL & GFS
- c. Reduction of paper used, for example: announcements and newsletters issued online
- d. Improvements in electrical equipment: motion sensors and temperature controls, for example
- e. Curriculum education efforts in place: curriculum objectives linked to “caring community” approach of Westport Social Skills Program at each grade level, League of Women Voters recycling education program in elementary schools
- f. Green Club at Staples High School objectives to increase CL&P Clean Energy sign-ups to earn solar panels for Town buildings
- g. Student-led sale of reusable bags at BMS to raise funds to purchase trees

### **Current Initiatives**

- a. Investment in Vector software program to improve energy efficiency of school system’s 2600 computers
- b. Plans for RFPs to include energy efficiency features, for example: take Long Lots Elementary School “off the grid” and improve operations and physical plant energy efficiency
- c. Other Board of Education budgeted initiatives

### **Recommendations**

- a. Using KHS recycling program as a model, visit each school and meet with principals and PTA to encourage modifying waste disposal practices to include recycling/reusing campaigns
- b. Ask Board of Ed to analyze school cafeteria contracts to see where environmentally sound long-term changes can be effected
- c. Institute tree-planting programs by students aligned with long-term landscaping plans to empower children to make concrete improvements

- d. Using suggestion boxes around schools (GFS already has “Green Tips” boxes), ask for feedback from students from elementary through high school for ways for schools to improve reducing impact on environment
  - i. student pledges
  - ii. ENERGYHOG surveys
- e. In depth look at curriculum efforts, grade-by-grade to see where enhancements could be suggested.
- f. Meeting w/Woody Bliss, First Selectman of Weston, to explore other initiatives regarding efficiency of education facilities
- g. Explore long term solar options (optimal locations on education buildings) with DPW Steve Edwards
- h. Meeting with Board of Education Chairman to discuss long term options for Town Education Budget
- i. Explore opportunities for high school video courses to produce WeGreenWestport ads for Town
- j. Place info from [www.wegreenwestport](http://www.wegreenwestport) site on Town TV channel

## **Local Residents**

### **Accomplishments to Date**

- a. Pledge Cards created, ready for distribution
- b. Town website linked to [www.WeGreenWestport.org](http://www.WeGreenWestport.org)
- c. Blog at [www.WeGreenWestport.wordpress.com](http://www.WeGreenWestport.wordpress.com) with links to Town website up and running
- d. Formation of *WeGreen Neighbors* subcommittee - now seeking new members.
- e. Hosting Film “Everything’s Cool” Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> @ Long Lots Elementary School
- f. Selectman Gordon Joseloff hosted Green Bag Lunch with Stew Leonard’s to discuss efforts to go green

### **Current Initiatives**

- a. Give PowerPoint presentations to community groups: Rotary clubs, Y’s Men/Women, Westport Young Women’s League, Toquet Hall, Key Club, Westport/Weston Family Y
- b. Presentations and presence at Green Earth Fair at Earthplace in April 2008
- c. Offer \$5,000 Challenge to community groups who come up with creative ways to use these funds to “go green”
- d. Work with *WeGreen Neighbors* subcommittee to promote pledge card signups
- e. Set up “programmable thermostat” signups with small community groups
- f. Establish monthly event calendar, to include screenings, meetings and events on website and blog
- g. Establish residential award program to encourage residents to implement green practices

### **Recommendations**

- a. Weekly/Monthly column in local papers highlighting GETF activities
- b. Coordinate with Staples Green Club on “green events”, such as concerts, lightbulb sales, clean energy signups
- c. Work with local consultant to set up home energy audits
- d. Centralize online database of commuters for carpooling
- e. Gather core group of residents that will “Take the LEED” in order to improve their residential energy profile
- f. Work with local businesses to offer incentives to “green minded” consumers, such as discounts for using reusable bags, lower price if you

bring in own coffee cup, restaurant discounts at “Dressing Room” for shopping at farmers market

- g. Make carbon footprint reducing products available for sale and promotion, such as hot water tank wrapper, CFLs, solar/LED Christmas lights, reusable drink containers, test drives of hybrid cars
- h. Create buy-local awareness campaign that allows consumers to make informed decisions. Ask local sellers to label origin of products and promote “locally grown” options



## **Recommendations for Commercial Businesses and Buildings**

### **Accomplishments to Date**

- a. Ongoing business committee meetings
- b. Engagement of local real estate owners and key business leaders for input (Meetings already held with representatives of Gault, Oscars, and others to receive input.)

### **Current Initiatives**

- a. Distribute WeGreenWestport pledge cards to key business sites for public to pick up
- b. Highlight businesses that go green with decals and awards
- c. Engage businesses to hold and host seminars (i.e. Stew Leonards) on greening practices
- d. Contact key businesses (i.e. Kowalski, Mitchells) to become leaders in these efforts

### **Recommendations**

- a. Develop subcommittee advisory group of committed businesses to publicize initiatives. Possible members: Patagonia, Trader Joes, Westport Wax and Wash, Gault, etc.
- b. Involve Downtown Merchants Association, Chamber of Commerce
- c. Hold seminars on “What to’s and How to’s”
- d. Hold seminars on State and or Federal incentive programs.
- e. Emphasize need for urgency. “Later is Yesterday”, Tom Freedman
- f. Encourage use of train shuttle and car pooling, using website matching system on Town website
- g. Use Town web site as distribution point for information on energy saving initiatives and to acknowledge successes.
- h. Establish awards program for businesses which implement green practices
- i. Schedule green bag lunches featuring businesses implementing green practices